



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(April 11 – 16, 2018, 2018)

Overview

- ▶ Events of the third Friday of the "great return march" were less intense and there were fewer casualties than on the two previous Fridays. **The Hamas leadership was conspicuously absent.** In view of the decline in public interest in "great return march" activities, senior Hamas figures continue to stress that **activities will peak on May 15** (Nakba Day). Under the cover of riots, **the number of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks from the Gaza Strip increased.** The IDF exposed a terrorist attack tunnel east of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip. The tunnel, which penetrated into Israeli territory, was supposed to have been used to carry out terrorist attacks.
- ▶ **Judea and Samaria were relatively quiet.** The commission for detainees and ex-detainees affairs held a press conference to launch Palestinian Prisoners' Day, 2018 (held every year on March 17). Activities have been planned for Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip in support of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The "great return march" of Friday, April 20, 2018, will be dedicated to the prisoners and shaheeds.
- ▶ The Arab League held a summit meeting in Saudi Arabia. Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech in which he claimed that east Jerusalem **"has been and will eternally remain the capital of the state of Palestine."** He made a similar comment at the 9th International Islamic Jerusalem Conference he sponsored in Ramallah.

The "great return march" (updated to April 15, 2018)¹

- ▶ On Friday, April 13, 2018, the third Friday of the "great return march," rioting at the border fence began in the morning. Events were held **at five focal points along the border. About 10,000 Palestinians participated, burning Israeli flags, burning tires to spoil the snipers' ability to fire,** throwing stones and flying kites over Israeli territory (some of them attached to Molotov cocktails). There were several attempts to vandalize the barbed wire fence strung parallel to the border security fence, as well as attempts to cross the fence into Israeli

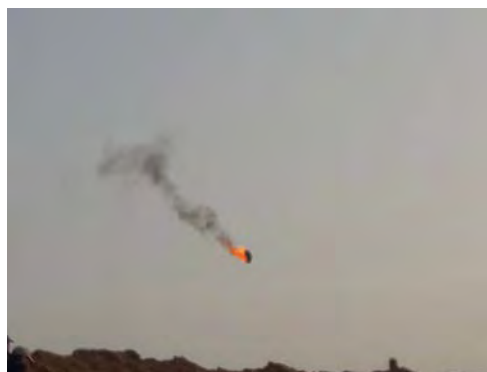
¹ For further information, see the April 15, 2018 bulletin, "The "Great Return March," Events of April 13, 2018."

territory. In addition, a number of terrorist attacks were attempted under cover of the riots. **One Palestinian, 28 years old, was killed by IDF fire, and more than 900 Palestinians were wounded** (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2018).



Right: Palestinians burn an Israeli flag during the "great return march" (Facebook page of al-Risalah, April 13, 2018). Palestinians attempt to vandalize the barbed wire fence (Facebook page of Shehab, April 13, 2018).

- ▶ IDF forces that were deployed for another day of riots and demonstrations were reinforced and dozens of snipers were posted along the border. A number of locations near the border were declared closed military zones. IDF forces used crowd control measures to disperse the riots and shot at the main instigators in accordance with IDF instructions for opening fire (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2018).
- ▶ Under cover of the riots a number of attempts to carry out terrorist attacks were made (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2018):
 - ◆ In the region of the **Karni crossing**, near the Sajaiya neighborhood, **an IED was placed a few meters from the fence**. It exploded on the Gazan side of the fence and apparently wounded several Palestinians.
 - ◆ **A Palestinian threw a suspicious object**, apparently an IED, a few meters from the border fence. Next to him were journalists and a man on crutches.
 - ◆ **An attempt was made to fly a kite with a Molotov cocktail attached** to set fire to Israeli fields near the border fence.



Right: A Molotov cocktail thrown at IDF forces near the border fence (Palinfo Twitter account, April 13, 2018). Left: A kite with a Molotov cocktail attached flown towards Israeli territorial. It fell inside the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2018).

► This past week the events were less intense and the number of demonstrators was smaller than in past weeks. **The Hamas leadership was conspicuous by its absence**, with only junior commanders present. Senior Hamas figures stressed that **the events would peak on May 15, 2018** (Nakba Day) (al-Aqsa, date, 2018).

Demonstrations, clashes and riots

► This past week demonstrations and riots continued in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem. Several hundred Palestinians clashed with the Israeli security forces at a number of locations in Judea and Samaria. **The protests were very limited in scope compared with the events of the "great return march" in the Gaza Strip.** The Palestinian health authorities reported a number of Palestinians wounded in clashes in Beit El, north of al-Bireh, and south of Nablus (Wafa, Shabakat Quds and Amama, April 13, 2018). Some of the demonstrations protested the attack in Syria carried out by the United States, France and Britain.

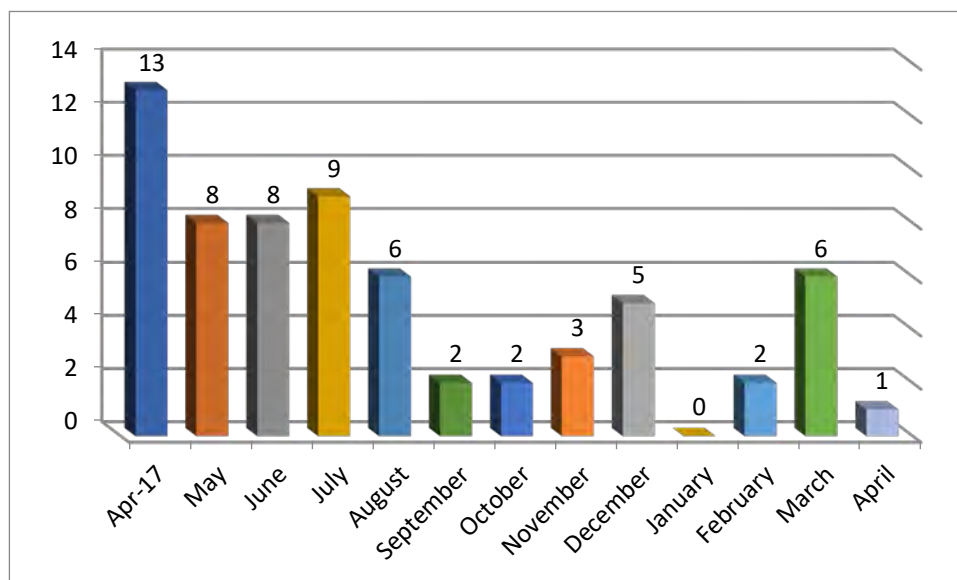


A girl stands on the neck of an effigy of Donald Trump and throws shoes at it during a demonstration in Nablus (Twitter account of QudsN, April 14, 2018).

► Palestinians continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and civilian targets. Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and seizing weapons. The more prominent events were the following:

- ◆ **April 16, 2018** – Israeli security forces in **the Azoun area (between Nablus and Qalqilya)** locating terrorist operatives were attacked by Palestinians throwing Molotov cocktails. No casualties were reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 16, 2018).
- ◆ **April 15, 2018** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near **the Tarqumiya crossing (west of Hebron)**. No casualties were reported. The vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 15, 2018).
- ◆ **April 15, 2018** – The Israeli security forces ambushed Palestinians throwing stones at the road near **the village of Harmala (near Gush Etzion)** (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 15, 2018).
- ◆ **April 14, 2018** – Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at a vehicle on **the Gush Etzion-Hebron road near Bayt Umar**. No casualties were reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 14, 2018).
- ◆ **April 12, 2018** – An IED was thrown at the Israeli security forces operating in **the Fara refugee camp near Nablus**. No casualties or damage were reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 12, 2018).
- ◆ **April 12, 2018** – The police received a report that graffiti had been sprayed on the walls of a mosque in **the village of Aqraba (near Nablus)**. An attempt had also been made to set the door of the mosque on fire. Palestinians sources denounced the event, blamed Israel and called for an appeal to international institutions (Wafa, April 13, 2018).
- ◆ **April 11, 2018** – An IDF force detained a Palestinian who had thrown a Molotov cocktail **near Beit El** (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 11, 2018).

Significant terrorist attacks during the past year ²



Summary of terrorist attacks, March 2018³

► During March 2018 there was a small decline in the number of terrorist attacks. **In Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem a total of 132 terrorist attacks** were carried out (compared with 139 in February 2018). In Judea and Samaria there were 111 terrorist attacks, 20 in Jerusalem and one inside Israel (a vehicular attack in the northern city of Acre on March 4, 2018). **Most of the attacks (115) involved Molotov cocktails. Three Israelis were killed in the attacks:** one in a stabbing attack in Jerusalem on March 18, 2018, and two members of the Israeli security forces in a vehicular attack in Jenin on March 16, 2018. Nine Israelis were wounded, seven of them members of the security forces.

Israel's South

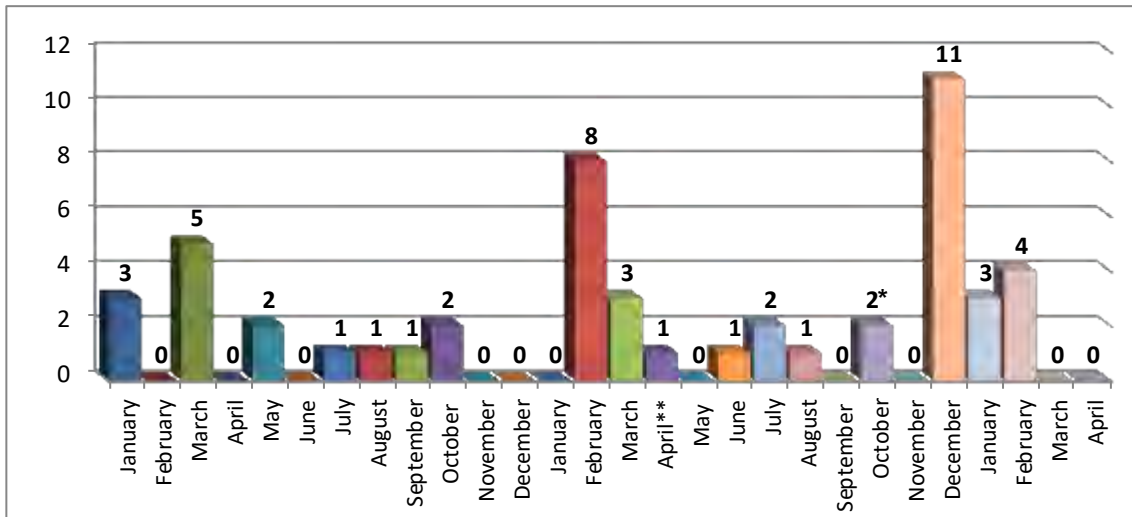
Rocket fire

► This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

² A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, shooting, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

³ According to data from the Israel Security Agency. Incidents of stone-throwing are not included.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016

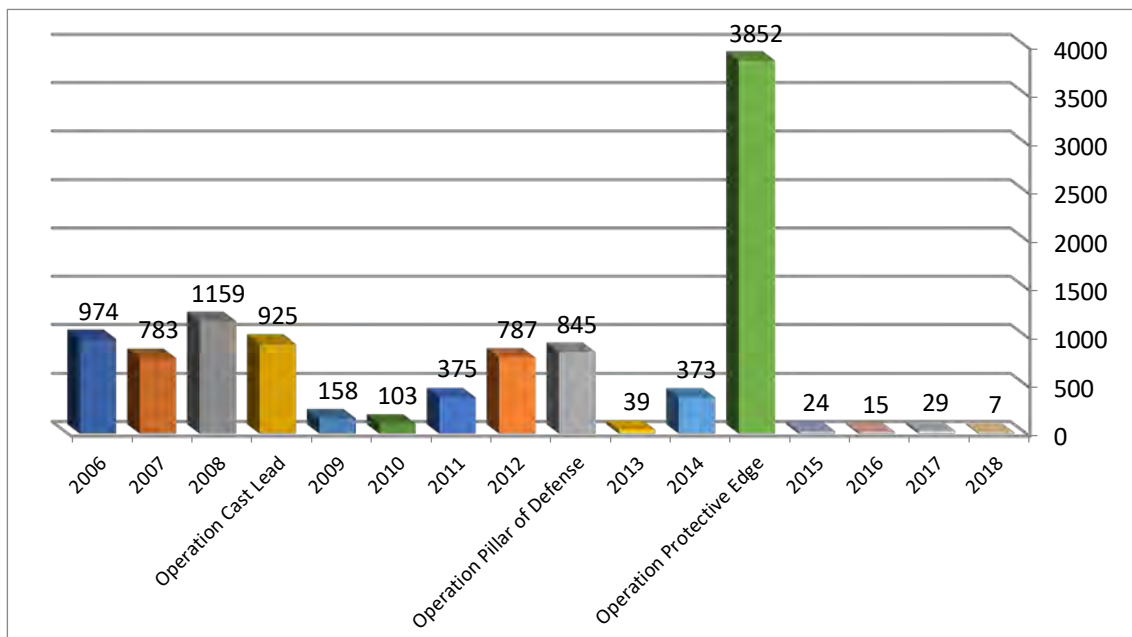


Notes:

* The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

** Six of the rockets fired in February 2017 were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli territory, apparently by ISIS's Sinai Province. In April a rocket was launched from the Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province. In October 2017 two rockets were fired from the northern Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province. They fell in an open area in the western Negev.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



Events along the Gaza Strip border

Hamas terrorist tunnel exposed

► Over the weekend the IDF exposed and neutralized a **Hamas terrorist attack tunnel** in the region of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip. It had been identified at an earlier stage and monitored by the Israeli security forces. The IDF spokesperson reported that the tunnel, which was constructed after Operation Protective Edge, was **several kilometers long and joined a tunnel network inside the Gaza Strip**. No weapons were found in the tunnel. According to senior IDF officers, **it was intended to be used by terrorist operatives to infiltrate into Israeli territory to carry out terrorist attacks** (IDF spokesperson, April 15, 2018). Avigdor Lieberman, the Israeli minister of defense, said it was the longest and deepest tunnel exposed to date (Twitter account of Avigdor Lieberman, April 16, 2018).



Right: Opening of the tunnel exposed east of Jabalia. Left: The route of the tunnel (IDF spokesperson, April 15, 2018).

Kites with Molotov cocktails attached flown into Israeli territory

► On April 15, 2018, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip flew a **kite into Israeli territory with a Molotov cocktail attached to its tail**. The Molotov cocktail set a fire in the Kissufim Forest in the western Negev. Firefighters gained control over the blaze. No casualties were reported. During the demonstrations on Friday, April 13, 2018, Gazans also used kites to fly Molotov cocktails into Israeli territory (Ynet, April 15, 2018).

Attacks from the Gaza Strip

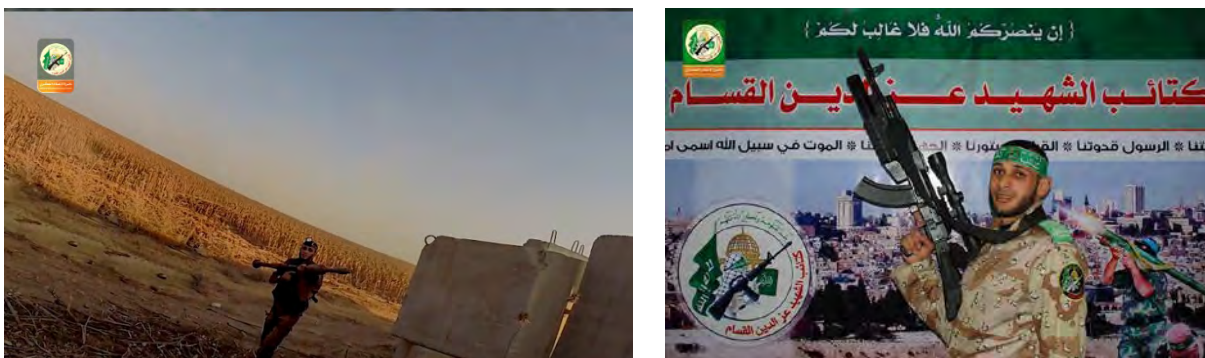
► On **April 11, 2018, an IED was detonated to attack an IDF bulldozer** engaged in routine operations in Israeli territory near the Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported. In response IDF tanks fired shells at three observation posts near the Zeitun neighborhood in Gaza City

(Shehab, April 11, 2018). On **April 12**, 2018, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a Hamas post. Operatives of Hamas' military wing shot anti-aircraft weapons at the planes. One of the bullets fired from the Gaza Strip hit a house in the community of Shaar Hanegev. No casualties were reported (Ynet, April 12, 2018). In response to the anti-aircraft attack Israeli Air Force aircraft struck the terrorist squad killing a terrorist operative from Hamas' military wing.



Hamas post in the eastern Gaza Strip attacked by the IDF (Palinfo Twitter account, April 11, 2018).

► The terrorist operative was **Muhammad Ahmed Hjeila**, 31, from Sajaiya. According to Hamas' military wing, he had participated in the infiltration of the IDF Nahal Oz post during Operation Protective Edge (on July 28, 2018; five IDF soldiers were killed in the attack). His brother, **Adham Hjeila**, who was also a Hamas terrorist operative, was killed on December 7, 2004, in a clash with an IDF force near a booby-trapped Hamas tunnel which penetrated into Israeli territory near the Karni crossing (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, April 12, 2018). **Senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya** eulogized him, saying that when the "popular resistance" is the path of choice, the Palestinians leave their weapons at home. However, **when the time came for jihad, he said, they would use missiles, IEDs and explosives to "blow up in the face of the enemy"** (al-Mayadeen, April 13, 2018).



**Right: Notice commemorating Muhammad Hjeila (Facebook page of al-Risalah, April 12, 2018).
Left: Muhammad Hjeila in a Hamas attack infiltrating an IDF post at Nahal Oz during Operation Protective Edge (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, April 15, 2018).**

Developments in the Gaza Strip

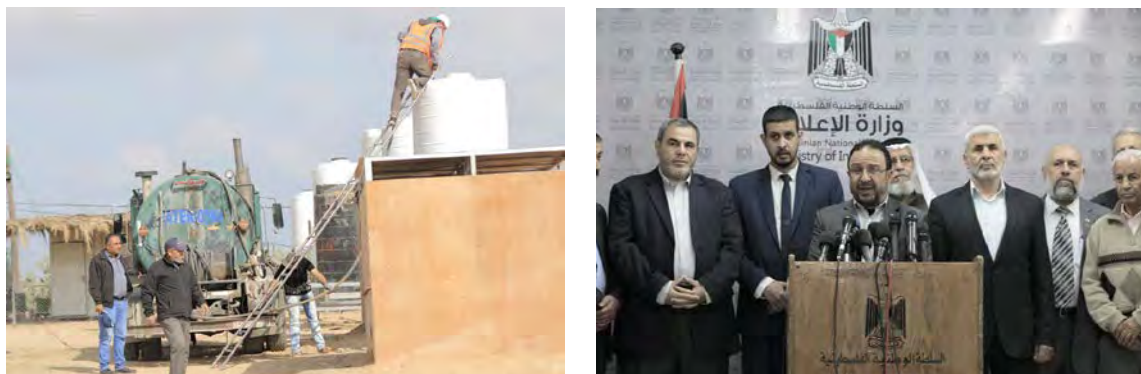
The Rafah crossing

► On April 12, 2018, the Rafah crossing opened in both directions for the passage of people with humanitarian issues, students and holders of residence visas. During the days the crossing was open, about 2,500 Gazans left and about 400 entered (al-Quds, April 15, 2018). After three days Egypt closed the crossing (Palinfo, April 15, 2018).

The humanitarian situation

► **Muhammad Thabet, spokesman for the electric company**, said electricity was being provided in cycles of four hours with a 16-hour hiatus. He said there was a shortage of 380 megawatts. He said the power plant and the lines from Gaza Strip had ceased operation (Filastin al-Yawm, April 15, 2018).

► The heads of the association of Gaza Strip municipalities held a press conference where they warned that a **"humanitarian catastrophe"** would be visited upon the Gaza Strip. They said there was a severe shortage of drinking water, and warned of a collapse of the health system, which was suffering from a critical lack of equipment. They called on the international community and human rights organizations to intervene and help (al-Aqsa, April 12, 2018).



Right: Nizar Hijazi, Hamas-affiliated mayor of Gaza City and chairman of the Gazan municipalities' association, warns of a collapse of the services of the municipalities in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Gaza City municipality, April 11, 2018). Left: Water, sewage, sanitation and lighting services provided by the Gaza City municipality to the Gazans in the tent camp erected for the "great return march" east of Gaza City (Facebook page of the Gaza City municipality, April 10, 2018).

► Demonstrations were held throughout the Gaza Strip protesting the Palestinian Authority (PA) for not transferring payments and salaries, part of the sanctions Mahmoud Abbas imposed on the Gaza Strip. The protests included a demonstration of the families of Gazans killed and wounded, held in front of banks. They expressed rage at the PLO for not transferring their monthly allotments (Dunia al-Watan, April 12, 2018).⁴



Families of shaheeds close the branch of the Bank of Palestine in western Gaza City to protest the non-transfer of payments by the PA (website of 8 o'clock, April 12, 2018).

⁴ For further information, see the April 9, 2018, bulletin, "Terror funding by the Palestinian Authority: Mahmoud Abbas recently approved the budget for 2018, about 7% of which is devoted to assisting prisoners, released terrorists, and families of shahids."

Four PIJ terrorist operatives killed in a "work accident"

► **Four terrorist operatives of the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) were killed** in an explosion near Rafah on April 14, 2018. An IED or a rocket they were transporting in a three-wheeled motorbike exploded. According to the initial reports, they were killed in an Israeli attack (Palinfo, April 14, 2018). The PIJ later said that **the four were killed in an explosion that occurred during "preparations," calling it a "work accident"** (Palinfo, April 14, 2018).



Right: The three-wheeled motor bike that exploded (Facebook page of, Rafah al-'An, April 14, 2018). Left: The operatives killed (left to right): Hashem Calab, 'Aad al-Hameida, Hashem Abd al-'Al, and Amjad al-Qatrus (Paltoday TV channel, April 14, 2018).

► Their funeral was attended by senior Hamas figures, among them Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, and Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau. Khalil al-Haya called on Israel to wait for what would happen on May 15, saying the day would **"have consequences."** That, he said, was because **"on that day the giant Palestinian jihad fighter will emerge and no one will be able to stop him"** (al-Aqsa TV website, April 15, 2018).



Right: Khalil al-Haya delivers a speech at the funeral (al-Aqsa TV, April 15, 2018). Left: Isma'il Haniyeh (first row, third from left) at the funeral (Palinfo Twitter account, April 15, 2018).

Hamas launches a new news service

► On April 14, 2018, the information unit of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, launched a WhatsApp news service. According to the announcement, it will provide subscribers with news about the military wing, including pictures and videos (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, April 15, 2018).



**New WhatsApp service launched by Hamas' military wing
(Twitter account of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, April 14, 2018)**

Plans for a flotilla from Europe to the Gaza Strip

► The **Ship to Gaza Norway** campaign reported that a Norwegian fishing boat built in 1963 and currently being renovated would participate in the flotilla to the Gaza Strip scheduled for July 2018. The boat, according to the report, will be named al-Awda ("the return") and join three vessels from Sweden (campaign website, April 13, 2018). The Facebook page of the "great return march" posted a notice from **Issam Adwan, head of Hamas' refugee department**, who wrote that the "return boats" should sail towards Jaffa and Haifa, and not towards the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the "great return march," April 14, 2018).

► **Zaher Birawi, operates in London and serves as chairman of the "international committee for breaking the siege of Gaza"** (a member of the so-called "freedom flotilla coalition") and participates in organizing flotillas, claimed preparations for the flotilla were of particular importance in view of the "great return march." He claimed the ships can be expected to reach the Gaza Strip at the beginning of July 2018, after having anchored en route at ten ports in European countries and one Arab port. At each port, he claimed, activities would be held in solidarity with the Gaza Strip and demands would be voiced to lift

the "siege." He claimed the ships were relatively small, and would carry public figures and activists from more than 20 countries (Filastin al-Yawm, Quds Press and the Twitter account of Zaher Birawi, April 13, 2018' Facebook page of Zaher Birawi, April 14, 2018).



Right: The al-Awda (Facebook page of the Ship to Gaza Norway campaign, April 13, 2018). Left: Notice posted to the Facebook page of Zaher Birawi with a report about the ship and the date of the flotilla's sailing (Facebook page of Zaher Birawi, April 14, 2018).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Arab League holds a summit meeting to discuss Jerusalem

► The Arab League held a summit meeting in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on April 15, 2018. **The meeting was called the "Jerusalem summit," and held to discuss the Palestinian cause and the planned relocating of the American embassy to Jerusalem. Mahmoud Abbas** gave a speech in which he said that the American administration had violated international laws by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He added that the measure would in effect turn the United States into a side in the conflict. He emphasized the importance of Jerusalem for the Palestinian people, saying that east Jerusalem **"has been and will eternally remain the capital of the state of Palestine."** He also said the PA would continue supporting the residents of Jerusalem, and called on those present to encourage visits to the city. He said that despite the many resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council, the Palestinian cause remained unresolved. He also made reference to the "great return march," which he claimed was being carried out "peacefully," while Israel ("the army of the occupation") was shooting live ammunition at the demonstrators (Palestinian TV, April 15, 2018).

► Salman bin Abd al-Aziz, the king of Saudi Arabia, said his country would donate \$50 million to UNRWA and \$150 million to a program to support the *waqf* [Muslim endowments] in Jerusalem (al-Arabiya, April 15, 2018).



Mahmoud Abbas gives a speech at the Arab League summit (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, April 15, 2018).

Speech regarding Jerusalem given by Mahmoud Abbas at an international conference in Ramallah

► The 9th International Islamic Jerusalem Conference was held in Ramallah, **sponsored by Mahmoud Abbas**. He gave a speech in which he stressed **the Palestinian "resistance" to any compromise regarding Jerusalem. He said "the Palestinian, Arab, Muslim or Christian has not yet been born who will negotiate Jerusalem or give it up"** (Palestinian TV, date, 2018).

► On the sidelines of the conference **Khalil Karaji al-Rifa'i, director of the Methaq Center** for Islamic Heritage and Research, **signed an agreement for cooperation with Uğur Ünal, director of the Ottoman State Archives**, to exchange documents and information. According to Ünal, the agreement will help the Palestinians preserve their assets and display copies of documents from the Ottoman State Archives. Al-Rifa'i said employees of the land authority, the authority for the struggle against the fence and the ministry of Muslim endowments in the PA would shortly begin studying the Ottoman language to be able to examine the original documents, which would **help keep Palestinians lands from "being stolen by Israel"** (al-Anadolu News, April 12, 2018).⁵

⁵ For activities to locate Ottoman documents, see the March 15, 2018, bulletin, "The Palestinian Authority in collaboration with Turkey is searching the Ottoman State Archives for documentation regarding Palestinian ownership of lands, including *waqf* property in Jerusalem, to prevent land from being sold to Israel."

► During the conference there was a display, sponsored by TIKA,⁶ including documents and pictures from the Ottoman State Archives, whose theme was "the rights granted to non-muslims in the city of Jerusalem" (website of the Turkish broadcasting authority in Arabic, April 11, 2018).



Right: Signing the agreement (Facebook page of Methaq, April 12, 2018). Left: Display of documents from the Ottoman State Archives on the sidelines of the conference in Ramallah (website of the Turkish broadcasting authority in Arabic, April 11, 2018).

Launching Palestinian Prisoners' Day events

- The commission of detainees and ex-detainees affairs held a press conference to launch the events of Palestinian Prisoners' Day, 2018 (held on April 17). Many activities are planned for Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to show support for the prisoners in Israeli jails. The "great return march" of Friday, April 20, will also be dedicated to the prisoners and shaheeds.
- The commission of detainees and ex-detainees affairs announced that the administrative prisoners in Israeli jails had decided to escalate their struggle and would begin an unlimited hunger strike on April 15, 2018 (Dunia al-Watan, April 10, 2018).
- **Issa Qaraqe, chairman of the PA commission of detainees and ex-detainees affairs,** called on the UN secretary general to declare Israel an apartheid country and add it to the list of terrorist countries because of its "crimes" against the Palestinians, especially the prisoners. He also called on all the parliaments around the globe to boycott the Knesset because of its racist laws, which were a "danger to justice and humanitarian values" (Wafa, April 10, 2018).

⁶ **TIKA, the Turkish Cooperation and coordination agency,** is a Turkish humanitarian aid organization cooperating with the PA in locating documents in the Ottoman State Archives.



Issa Qaraqe, chairman of the PA commission of detainees and ex-detainees affairs, at a press conference launching Palestinian Prisoners' Day (website of the commission, April 11, 2018).